Thank you for the opportunity to serve the members of ESTA

GREETINGS FROM THE SHORT-TIMERS CLUB. Yes, after six years, this December 31, I will no longer be president of ESTA. It has been an adventurous tenure to say the least with many ups and downs, but I am grateful to have had the opportunity to serve the membership of ESTA and the many great programs that we oversee.

When I took over from Bill Groener, the previous ESTA president, we were on the verge of our merger with PLASA and a new name. I was the first, and eventually the only, chairman of PLASA North America. The merger was to be a new way forward for the association and was made with an eye to solidifying our future in North America and our place in the global market. For the many reasons previously detailed both here, and in other Protocol articles, it didn’t work out.

Some people might see this as a failure, but in business as in life, playing it safe and maintaining the status quo is a sure way to guarantee one’s own obsolescence. We learned a great deal through those experiences, and, while we have our challenges in the coming years, ESTA is stronger and more unified in our efforts than ever before.

I’ve been asked more than once, “Why would you take this on? What’s in it for you?” The answer is pretty simple. To quote Rocky Paulson from his Swan Award acceptance speech, “Volunteering is its own reward.” (Read Rocky’s inspiring speech in the Winter 2014 Protocol.) What anyone gets out of anything in life is directly proportional to what they put into it. That’s as true in personal relationships as it is in school, business, work, and this association. I have seen literally hundreds of individuals and companies dedicate countless unpaid hours to the Technical Standards Program, the Entertainment Technician Certification Program, the Business Resource program, Behind the Scenes, and more. This volunteer work to serve a higher purpose is the bone, muscle, and gristle that is ESTA. It is why ESTA has succeeded in the past and why we will succeed in the future.

So, as I wrap up my tenure as president, I want to thank everyone who has made this experience exceptional. I would be remiss if I didn’t first thank the leadership of my own IATSE Local 16 for covering much of the expense involved in traveling to meetings and carrying out the responsibilities of being president. Like so many organizations that support the volunteers that make ESTA run, they understand the value of the association and have done their part to help it succeed.

I’d like to thank the ESTA staff. I’m not sure the members understand just how small, efficient, and dedicated they are. Under the leadership of Lori Rubenstein this tiny staff adds more to the GNP than should be expected from any group of workers, and we the members are the beneficiary of that work. From the office to the program managers to the editor and all who work on Protocol, everyone approaches their work with enthusiasm and an eye to making each part successful and relevant to the membership.

I’d like to thank the officers and the board of directors, past, present, and future for their hard work and dedication to the membership. Aside from attending the four board meetings a year, they serve on the many committees that make things happen in the association, participate in countless conference calls, and help the staff whenever possible.

I’d like to thank the many, many volunteers who run all of the programs that make membership in ESTA an essential part of any entertainment professional’s portfolio. The work they do literally makes the entertainment technology industry better every day.

Finally, I’d like to thank you, the members of ESTA. Your continued membership and support of the ESTA programs is essential to the success of your association. I have had the good fortune to meet many of you at meetings and trade shows as well as in the field. Your enthusiasm for the industry is contagious—we seem to get it from one another. It is my hope that we can create a pandemic of that support in the future that is caught by everyone in the entertainment technology business so that this association and our industry can continue to thrive, adapt, and innovate in new and exciting ways.

I hope to see you around. If you do, please stop and say hello. Until then, thanks for a great ride.

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